

## Shorter Contributions

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THE RUDDY DAGGERWING (*MARPESIA PETREUS*): A NEW FACE IN VIRGINIA --The ruddy daggerwing (*Marpesia petreus*) is a common Neotropical butterfly, resident in southern Florida, the West Indies, and the mainland of Latin America from Mexico south to Brazil (Opler & Krizek, 1984; Opler, 1998). It is associated with figs and rotting fruit. Stray individuals of this species have been recorded in the western United States from Texas, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, and Arizona (Opler, 1998). The only records of strays in the eastern United States are from northern Florida (Opler, 1998).

On 17 July 1995, while conducting a survey for rare butterflies and dragonflies for the Virginia Division of Natural Heritage (VDNH), I was in the process of exploring a beach across from the amphibious LARC vehicle hangers on the Fort Story Military Reservation in the City of Virginia Beach. After I had passed through a narrow border of evergreen shrub just before entering the open beach, an orange butterfly flew out of a dense live oak (*Quercus virginiana*)/wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*) thicket. It landed on a common reed (*Phragmites australis*) stem about 25 m away. I slowly stalked the butterfly and caught it in my net. It was a ruddy daggerwing, the first known record for Virginia. The specimen was in perfect condition considering its long journey. A few days earlier, Chris Hobson, field zoologist for VDNH, observed a gulf fritillary (*Agraulis vanillae*) on this beach. I have sighted the gulf fritillary, a known migrant, many times in late summer on the Eastern Shore barrier islands.

The specimen will be donated to the National Museum of Natural History (Smithsonian Institution) via Steve Roble of VDNH.

## Literature Cited

Opler, P. A. 1998. A Field Guide to Eastern Butterflies. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. 486 pp.

Opler, P. A., & G. O. Krizek. 1984. Butterflies East of the Great Plains. The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore. 294 pp.

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LYTTA POLITA (SAY), A BLISTER BEETLE NEW TO THE VIRGINIA FAUNA (COLEOPTERA: MELOIDAE) -- The blister beetle genus *Lytta* is represented by a profusion of species in western United States, but only a few, all in the subgenus *Pomphopoea*, occur in the eastern states. These are big (up to 25 mm long), soft-bodied insects usually most active in the spring months, which frequently achieve nuisance status by consuming, in enormous numbers, the foliage and flowers of many kinds of plants. The genus was revised by Selander (1960) in a treatment that included lists of museum specimens and distribution maps. Of the four eastern species, Selander had seen Virginia material of only one, *L. aenea* Say, which generally occurs statewide. *Lytta sayi* LeConte occurs further north and west, and *L. unguicularis* (LeConte) is recorded no closer to Virginia than the mountains of western North Carolina.

The fourth eastern species, *L. polita* Say, has a distinctly austral distribution ranging from North Carolina to Louisiana and south through most of Florida. With the northernmost localities at Raleigh (Selander, 1960) and Washington (Brimley, 1938), North Carolina, the presence of *L. polita* in Virginia was very probable, and this likelihood has been confirmed in the past decade by surveys of both the Virginia Museum of Natural History and Virginia Division of Natural Heritage. Four instate localities can now be documented: *Isle of Wight Co.*: Zuni Pine Barrens and Blackwater Ecologic Preserve, ca. 7 km south of Zuni (10); *Mecklenburg Co.*: Elm Hill Wildlife Management Area (1); *Northampton Co.*: Savage Neck Natural Area Preserve, 5 km N of Cape Charles (1); *City of Virginia Beach*: Seashore/First Landing State Park (26). The Elm Hill locality is on the Piedmont, almost due north of Raleigh, and implies that the range of *L. polita* in southeastern Virginia may be more extensive than now known. The Savage Neck site is on the north side of the Chesapeake estuary, and is the new northernmost locality, some 135 miles/216 km north of Washington, North Carolina.

Virginia captures reflect the known vernal activity of this and related species. Eight specimens were trapped in late March, 22 in April, and only singles in May, June, July, and August. At Seashore State Park, pitfall arrays were operated simultaneously in three biotopes, of which the "dune" site yielded 26 specimens, "mesic", four specimens, and "scrub," only one. It is noteworthy that *L. polita* is unknown from elsewhere in Virginia

Beach despite the concurrent and subsequent operation of pitfall arrays in numerous other sites within a 20 mile/32 km radius of Seashore State Park, some of them in apparently very similar "dune" habitats.

*Lytta polita* is easily distinguished from the three other eastern species, being the only one in which the distal antennomeres are not enlarged, the pronotal disk is glabrous, and the pro- and mesotibiae (often the metatibiae as well) are black instead of orange. The elytra have a characteristic bronzy color, often tinged with purple or green.

#### Acknowledgments

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#### Literature Cited

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Selander, R. B. 1960. Bionomics, Systematics, and Phylogeny of *Lytta*, a Genus of Blister Beetles (Coleoptera, Meloidae). Illinois Biological Monographs 28: 1-295.

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**ADDITIONAL FIELD LONGEVITY RECORD FOR THE ALLEGHENY WOODRAT (*NEOTOMA MAGISTER*)** -- Previously, I reported two field records for longevity in wild Allegheny woodrats (Mengak 1997). One male lived a minimum of 45 months between first and last captures and a female lived a minimum of 49 months between first and last captures.

As part of a continuing long-term monitoring study, live trapping has been conducted at regular intervals at several sites in Virginia from 1990 to 2000. During this study an additional woodrat has been tagged and followed through time that now extends the previously

known field longevity record for this species. Individual woodrats are live trapped in Tomahawk collapsible traps baited with one-half apple during two consecutive nights on a bi-monthly schedule, weather permitting. Captured individuals are ear-tagged for permanent identification, sexed, weighed, examined for general body condition and reproduction status, and released at the capture site.

On 14 October 1995, I caught a 230-g subadult female woodrat at my study site in Giles County, Virginia. This site consists of a cliff and associated boulders, talus and rock outcrops. There are numerous crevices, cracks, overhangs and small caves. Dominant overstory vegetation includes oak (*Quercus* spp.), hickory (*Carya* spp.), maple (*Acer* spp.), and birch (*Betula* spp.). Understory vegetation includes blueberry (*Vaccinium* spp.), seedlings of overstory trees, and greenbrier (*Smilax* spp.). Assuming a weight gain of 1.0 g per day in wild woodrats (Mengak, unpubl. data) the individual was born about April 1, 1995. She was captured an additional nine times at the Giles County site.

On 6 April 1997 she was captured and found to be hypothermic and lethargic in the trap. She could not be warmed in the field and was returned to a holding facility at Ferrum College. While in the holding facility, she was feed commercial lab chow, apples and water ad libitum. I do not have a long-term animal holding facility. Further, I was scheduled to sample at a different long-term monitoring site in May. Therefore, on 17 May 1997, she was returned to the long-term study site in Bath County, Virginia. This site is approximately 125 km NE of the Giles County capture site. She was subsequently captured 16 times at the Bath County site. Interestingly, she was caught every night of every trapping period for four years.

Her last capture was on 18 October 1999. Thus, a total of four years and four days elapsed between first and last captures (1,464 days). If we assume an additional 200 days between birth and first capture, this individual survived a total of 1,664 days or 55.5 months in the wild (including 41 days in the lab). I have evidence that juveniles gain between 0.5 and 1.25 g per day in the wild but have not attempted to separate the effects of year, site, gender or any other variable. Thus, an assumed weight gain of 1.0 g per day is a conservative estimate. This extends the known minimum longevity for a wild woodrat from the previously reported 49 and 50 months to at least 55.5 months.

#### Literature Cited

Mengak, M. T. 1997. New field records for longevity in Allegheny woodrats (*Neotoma magister*). *Banisteria* 10: